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NO BASES NETWORK

Bulletin No. 2: International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases Ecuador, 5-9 March 2007

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The International Organizing Committee and the National Organizing Committee present their greetings through Bulletin No. 2 on the International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases to be held on 5-9 March 2007 in Quito and Manta (Ecuador). In this bulletin you will find information on the Conference, as well as on other processes and campaigns that work in the belief that Another World is Possible. We hope to see you soon in Ecuador in the International Conference.

Registration for self-organized events open for International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases

You can register workshops and self organized events starting January 5, 2007. Enter www.no-bases.net and register your event. All self-organized events will be carried out on Tuesday March 6 and Wednesday March 7, 2007. The organizers will define the final dates and hours for the sessions, and will inform the organizations that have registered self-organized events.

Workshops on Foreign Military Bases at 2007 World Social Forum

The International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases is organizing two workshops on Foreign Military Bases at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, to be held from 20-25 January 2007.

1) Gaining a Foothold: The United States' Plans for Expanding its Military Presence in Africa and other experiences

One of the United States biggest overseas military bases in the world is in Africa. Few people, even in Africa know this. This ignorance continues even while the US military base in Diego Garcia — which is part of the Mauritius' Chagos islands — has in recent years been used for to bomb Afghanistan and Iraq. The base also hosts a prison where “terrorist suspects” are believed to have

been “rendered.”

As the US undertakes its most comprehensive transformation of its global military deployment since World War II, Africa — which has been hosting bases used by European militaries — is being eyed to host even more foreign bases apart from Diego Garcia. Plans are foot for the establishment of US military installations or the securing of access to military facilities in the region. Algeria, Mali, Guinea, Djibouti are some of the countries that have been identified. Special Operations Forces are already stationed at the Horn of Africa. There is also a standing proposal to establish a separate US military command to cover the region, in the same way that the Pacific Command covers most of Asia and the Pacific while the Southern Command covers Latin America. Ostensibly, the US military presence is being justified as being aimed against “terrorists.” Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa has been designated part of the global “arc of instability” in which the US must expand or deepen its military presence. But with the Gulf of Guinea countries now supplying 16% of US energy requirements - a figure that’s projected to grow to as much as 25% by 2015, it is believed that - as in West Asia and Central Asia - US bases are being established to secure access to natural resources and to bolster the US capacity for rapid military interventions.

This will be an educational forum for sharing information and raising awareness on the latest US military plans and designs on Africa, for deepening our understanding of the larger implications of the current US global military realignment, and for learning from the experience of other countries that are also currently hosting foreign military presence.

2) Building the Movement: Africa and the Global Movement for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases

Even as the United States moves to expand and deepen its military presence around the world and in outer space, the past years has also seen the emergence of a global network for the abolition of foreign military bases. Spurred on by the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the global “war against terror,” the effort has seen the coming together of diverse regional, national, and community-based movements that have long been struggling against foreign military presence around the world - from Okinawa to Korea, from Puerto Rico to the Philippines, from Italy to Cuba. As the empire of bases expands its reach, so too are the movements building their ranks of solidarity and common action. Plans are underway for an international conference for the abolition of foreign military bases in Ecuador in March 2007. It is envisioned to be an opportunity for the movements to share their experiences, to plan for concrete actions, and to build the capacity of the network.

This will be a planning and networking workshop aimed at introducing the network to more people, to build links with African movements that share its concerns and aims, to collectively strategize and plan further, and to gather inputs on how to further strengthen the movement, through the Ecuador conference and other efforts. It is a continuation of the workshops that have been held in previous World Social Forums in Mumbai and Porto Alegre and other meetings.

<http://www.wsf2007.org>

www.no-bases.net

Ecuador elected President Correa pledges to close US Base in Manta

The Ecuador No Bases Coalition congratulated President Elect Rafael Correa, who will take office on January 15, 2007, for his pledge not to renew the agreement by which US soldiers are stationed in the Ecuadorean Manta Base in the Pacific Coast. The agreement finalizes in 2009 after being in

effect for 10 years.

The No Bases Coalition, formed by 20 Ecuadorean social organizations, recognized that newly elected President Correa had taken in the proposals made by social movements during many years, in relation to the opposition to foreign troops in Ecuador since it affected the countries' sovereignty.

In Ecuador, the participation of US Army troops in the Manta Base was presented as an opportunity for the development of Manta. However, this has not happened. In fact, the Manta Base has been used for migration control, support to the Colombian Plan and, in less extent, to combat drug-traffic, which was the stated objective. The security and militarization projects have ousted peasants and fisherfolk, who no longer have work in the area surrounding the Manta Base.

Since the Agreement was signed between the US and Ecuadorean governments, many organizations have carried out civil actions against the US troops in Ecuador. Due to the struggle carried out by the Ecuadorean people, the International No Bases Network decided to hold its Inaugural Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases in Quito and Manta (Ecuador) on March 5-9, 2007. With the announcement made by President Elect Correa, the Conference becomes even more important as we work towards the abolition of foreign military bases and the demilitarization of societies at national and global level, because we believe Another World is Possible.

www.no-bases.net

December 5th Solidarity Day with Haiti

Today our brother peoples of Haiti are submerged in a deep crisis, with no means to obtain basic services for human life development, facing a terrible and very painful situation as a product of the implementation of already failed neoliberal policies which deepen poverty and inequality even more. Haiti has hoisted the flag of freedom in our continent, favouring the abolition of slavery everywhere.

The economic, social and environmental destruction which predominates in this country is due mainly to the plunder processes it has been suffering for many centuries, and to the huge illegitimate, illegal and odious external debt which even though it has been paid many times, continues to accrue with the aggravating factor that the military occupation costs will probably be included in this debt.

Haiti is living in a state of invasion, of denial of its sovereignty, with the presence of the United Nation's Mission of Stabilization to Haiti troops helping to maintain this situation under the argument of stabilization and humanitarian aid hides, in fact, a laboratory where they are rehearsing new ways of militarization and control over the peoples of our continent. This imperialistic plan is backed by the governments of Latin America and from other continents, obeying the whims of foreign interests fulfilling the role of occupying a brother country.

December 5th * is a very significant date for the Haitian people because at different moments of its history it has raised in defence of its freedom and for the democratic right to choose its future. Let us accompany our brothers and sisters who once more on this date want to make their voices heard, carrying out in each of our places diverse activities, such as for example: street mobilizations, workshops, debates, film shows, opinion articles in the media, concentrations in front of the respective Embassies to demand the departure of the troops or sending letters to the governments of the 20 countries that have troops in Haiti.

Different organizations pertaining to Jubilee South's Network invite popular organizations the world over to unite in forwarding a huge job of denounce and solidarity, to assert the claim for the immediate withdrawal of the occupation troops and the total and unconditional cancellation of the External Debt illegitimately claimed from the most impoverished country of America. We should also put pressure for France, the U.S.A., and the international financial institutions that are responsible in a great measure for the Haitian crisis, to give back what they have already overcharged and make reparations for the perpetrated plunder. We have a historical debt with Haitian people for having opened the path to freedom for the peoples of the entire continent and all over the world.

For all these reasons we call on all of you to mobilize in solidarity with the struggle of the Haitian people for its right to decide its destiny with sovereignty and achieve a real peace with justice without a military or economic occupation.

STOP MILITARY AND ECONOMIC OCCUPATION!
YES TO SOVEREIGNTY! DEBT CANCELLATION NOW! LIFE NOT DEBT!

US Marine Guilty of Raping Filipina, 3 others acquitted

(Associated Press)

ONE of four US Marines accused of raping a Filipina in Subic last year was found guilty while three others were acquitted by a local court Monday. Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, 21, from St. Louis in Missouri, faces up to 40 years in prison following the verdict handed down by Judge Benjamin Pozon of Branch 139 of the Makati regional trial court (RTC). He was also ordered to pay P50,000 in compensatory and P50,000 in moral damages. Meanwhile, the court acquitted Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sergeant Chad Carpentier for lack of evidence. Pozon ruled on the case 23 days before the one-year deadline under the Visiting Forces Agreement to finish the case or return the Marines to US jurisdiction would have expired. As of posting time, Smith is at the Makati City Police office awaiting a commitment order from the court that will pave the way for his transfer to the Makati jail. Smith is inside the office of the Makati's deputy chief for operations under heavy security. Superintendent Gilbert Cruz, Makati City chief of police, said mugshots and fingerprints of Smith would be taken.

"Nicole," a court-appointed pseudonym, had accused Smith of raping her at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1, 2005 while the other three allegedly cheered him on. Smith had claimed that the sex act was "consensual." Instead, he became the first American soldier to be convicted of wrongdoing since the Philippine Senate ordered US bases shut down in the early 1990s and joint training was established under a treaty, the Visiting Forces Agreement, in 1998. Attorney Ricardo Diaz, Smith's lawyer, appealed to the court that his client be allowed to remain in the custody of the US embassy while his case was being appealed but Judge Pozon denied the lawyer's motion twice.

"Rape as a harrowing experience is not remembered in detail. It casts a stigma upon the victim. Rape is a grave physical violation and it subjects the woman's honor to scorn," said the lengthy verdict, read by a court employee as the proceedings were televised live nationwide. "The court is morally convinced that Smith is guilty of having committed the crime [as] charged," according to the ruling. "He was the one who was on top of the complainant, who resisted his kisses, pushed him and fought him back until she lost consciousness because of alcoholic drinks she had taken," it said.

The verdict also said that Nicole was so intoxicated that she could not have consented to sex, pointing to testimony that Smith carried her to a van where the incident occurred.

As for Carpentier, Silkwood, and Duplantis, the court said they could not be held as principal via indispensable cooperation, accessories, or accomplices. "The act of Smith can be committed without the acts of Carpentier. Besides he did know of Smith's plan. For Silkwood, the prosecution failed to present evidence that he knew what was happening at the backseat of the van," the court ruled. "While there was evidence that someone was uttering" f---, f---...coming, coming" there was no sufficient proof who said those words," the court added. "In so far as Duplantis, he did not perform separate act that could induce Smith in committing the crime subject of this case. He did not perform any act within which could lead to Smith performing such act committed to this case. He may be the one who uttered the words" f---, f--- "and" coming, coming" but there was no direct evidence that he said those words. He did nothing but sit inside the van and perhaps watch what Smith was doing," the court said.

Some cheers and applause broke out in the courtroom, and "Nicole" began weeping as supporters embraced her. "Thank God," she said, as her supporters, shouting, "Jail all the rapists...Huwaq palabasin 'yang mega yan [Don't let them out]," tried to block the four Americans who were escorted out of the courtroom.

About 100 protesters gathered outside the courthouse, chanting and singing "Bayan Ko" — "My Country" — a popular nationalist song. They waved a banner that read "Justice for Nicole, justice for our nation. Scrap VFA." As a van dropped the Americans off and they were escorted by 50 helmeted riot police toward the court, members of women's group came up from behind yelling, "Convict, convict! Justice, justice!" as they raised anti-US posters.

Not since the 1960s has a criminal case involving US servicemen created so much bitterness and anti-American feeling than what is popularly referred to as the Subic Bay rape case. For many it has revived memories of the "ugly American" when US servicemen stationed in the Philippines were frequently accused of bad behavior and, it is claimed, literally got away with murder in some cases. Filipinos have long been accustomed to the presence of US troops in their country. There were some 20,000 US servicemen at Subic Naval Base, then the repair and supply yard of the Japan-based US Seventh Fleet, and the Clark Air Base, home of the 13th US Air Force, before they and a handful of smaller facilities were handed over to the Philippines in 1992.

Washington installed the bases shortly after winning control of the Philippines from Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898. The Philippines won independence in 1946 and a year later the US signed a military bases agreement with its former colony allowing US forces use of Subic, Clark and 19 other smaller facilities for 99 years.

Powerpoint on US Military Bases

New US Military Bases: Side effects or causes of war? By Zoltán Grossman.

Check out the powerpoint presentation (available in English and Spanish) and use it in your organizations!

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